

<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Corporate Director</b>
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<b>Portfolio Leader:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Council: 22/05/13 Cabinet: 20/06/13</b>

**CABINET  
20 JUNE 2013  
JOINT INVESTMENT IN CANNOCK CHASE**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for a programme of joint investment with Staffordshire County Council into corporate priority areas in Cannock Chase District which have been added to the existing General Fund Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Council note the transfer of £3m from Staffordshire County Council into a joint account as part of a programme of joint investment between the two Councils.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve Permission to Spend on the following as part of this programme of joint investment:
- £50,000 investment in a programme of environmental improvements for Rugeley Town Centre.
  - £50,000 investment into the Rugeley Conservation Area in addition to all other funds already committed.
  - Up to £100,000 of English Heritage matched funds that may be available for the 2013/14 – 2015/16 period.
  - £30,000 to undertake necessary feasibility and technical assessment associated with the proposed construction of a full size artificial turf pitch at Hednesford Park or alternative location in Hednesford as appropriate.
- 2.3 That Cabinet receive further reports and requests for Permission to Spend as these projects are developed further in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council.

- 2.4 That Cabinet approve the submission of external grant applications to English Heritage, Sport England and any other relevant grant making body to secure matched funds for this joint investment programme.

### **3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 There is a longstanding commitment from Staffordshire County Council to invest up to £3m capital from the sale of Pye Green Valley into facilities for the Cannock Chase District. This decision was taken by the Staffordshire County Council Cabinet on 16 August 2006.
- 3.2 The Pye Green site has recently been sold and Staffordshire County Council has confirmed in writing its intention to make available £3m from the proceeds of the sale for a joint programme of investment to support economic prosperity and public health outcomes to benefit Cannock Chase.
- 3.3 This is part of the wider partnership between Staffordshire County Council and Cannock Chase Council which includes the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Local Economic Partnership and more recently, this Council's commitment to participate in the Staffordshire Local Transport Board.
- 3.4 A joint meeting called the Economic Growth and Governance Board has been set up to oversee this joint investment programme. Membership of the Board includes the Leader, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Planning, Chief Executive, Corporate Director and Head of Planning and Regeneration from Cannock Chase Council; and the Leader, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Cabinet Member for Environment and Assets, Head of Property, Commissioner for Strategic Planning, Enterprise and Economy from Staffordshire County Council.
- 3.5 The reason for this report is to request Permission to Spend in three areas so that progress can be made in delivering these projects. Further Permission to Spend reports will be submitted to Cabinet in this three year Budget period linked to the implementation of these priority projects.

### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities of economic prosperity and improved health by making direct investment in better sports and recreation facilities based on the evidence base in the Local Plan Part 1, by making improvements to the physical environment of Rugeley Town Centre and by establishing an Economic Development reserve for specific projects in the future.

### **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 As part of the partnership working between Cannock Chase Council and Staffordshire County Council on economic development, transport and asset management, confirmation has been received from Staffordshire County Council of their intention to make available £3m from the proceeds of sale of the Pye Green site for investment in Cannock Chase.
- 5.2 A number of discussions have taken place in the joint body called Economic Growth and Governance Board to identify and agree priority areas and projects for joint investment. The outcome of these discussions is that agreement has been reached on the overarching priority areas of economic prosperity and improved health outcomes.
- 5.3 Within these priority areas, agreement has been reached to allocate £1.5m to the development of the Stadium site on Pye Green Road into a community sports and recreation hub with the aim of increasing levels of physical activity for all age groups. Agreement has also been reached to allocate £1m for a second full size Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) based in Hednesford, The Sport England evidence base for Cannock Chase District confirms that three full size ATP's are required in the Local Plan period. As Members will already be aware, the Districts first full size ATP has been built and opened on the Cardinal Griffin High School site during 2012.
- 5.4 Agreement has also been reached to establish an Economic Development and Physical Asset Reserve of £400,000 which will be used to target specific priority projects.
- 5.5 Agreement has also been reached to invest the balancing sum of £100,000 into improvements in Rugeley Town centre. Specifically, these are £50,000 into a programme of environmental improvements to replace and enhance street furniture; and £50,000 to be used for matched funding which will bring an equivalent amount from English Heritage to continue the programme of improvements in the Rugeley conservation areas. In total, this will see additional investment of £150,000 to enhance the town centre environment which should contribute to increased footfall and so support businesses.
- 5.6 Planning consent will need to be secured for any approved development of the Stadium site and also for the proposed full size ATP at Hednesford. Should this not be secured for any reason then these funds would need to be re-allocated to other projects with the priority areas of economic prosperity and improved health outcomes.
- 5.7 This is a joint report that will be considered by both Councils. As per the Council's constitution, Cabinet will need to approve Permission to Spend for these projects and the joint Economic Growth and Governance Forum will oversee progress and expenditure. Project updates will be provided to Policy Development Committees, Cabinet and other committees as necessary.
- 5.8 This is a significant investment in additional facilities and projects in the District based on two priority areas. Cannock Chase Council continue to work in wider partnership with Staffordshire County Council as an active member of both the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Local Economic Partnership and the

emerging Staffordshire Local Transport Board. A recent example of the success of this wider partnership working is the £2m investment from the Pinchpoint programme for Churchbridge junction improvements.

5.9 A programme of environmental improvements in Rugeley Town centre is planned which includes new waste bins, painting of street structures, road signs, minor improvements to Rugeley Market hall, pedestrian pavers and deep cleaning. This will be delivered in conjunction with Staffordshire Highways and will commit the full £50,000 available in the 2014/15 financial year. The estimated costs totalling £50,000 are as follows:

- Painting street structures in black & gold livery - £15,000
- Supply and Installation of new litter bins - £17,525
- Specialist deep clean of pedestrian pavers - £7,800
- Improvements to Rugeley Market Hall via youth engagement project - £2,500
- Replacement of missing or broken pavers in pedestrian areas - £3,200
- Road signage, bike racks and miscellaneous - £3,975

5.10 The Council has been working closely with English Heritage and Staffordshire County Council to make improvements over a number of years to the Rugeley Town Centre and Talbot Street / Lichfield Street Conservation Areas. The £50,000 from this joint investment programme plus the £50,000 previously committed to this project by Staffordshire County Council in 2014/15 should enable the Council to secure matched fund of up to a further £100,000 from English Heritage in this financial year plus the financial contributions made by the owners of the properties in the Conservation Areas. Permission to Spend is required for the £50,000 and also for any matched funds secured from English Heritage to enable further projects to proceed.

5.11 The programme of environmental improvements and further investment in Rugeley Conservation Areas are designed to improve the attractiveness of Rugeley Town Centre and to increase customer footfall which in turn should support the businesses that trade in the town. In the longer term, the Conservation Areas are enhanced and improved by these investments.

5.12 In order to assess the technical feasibility of establishing a full size Artificial Turf Pitch at Hednesford Park, professionals will need to be engaged to conduct surveys and to consider the planning issues. It is also prudent to examine other sites in Hednesford in case there is a better site than Hednesford Park to site this facility. It is estimated that up to £30,000 will be needed in this financial year to conduct this work. A report will then be submitted to Cabinet to feedback on this feasibility work including preferred site and key planning issues.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

- 6.1.1 A joint account has been created between Cannock Chase Council and Staffordshire County Council in relation to £3m from the sale of land in Pye Green Valley. The account is part of a programme of joint investment between the two Councils with its specific schemes highlighted in the report.

Cannock Chase Council will act as the accountable body for the expenditure and will draw down funds as required in accordance with Governance arrangements for the joint investment.

Council at its meeting on 22 May 2013 approved the following additions/variations to the General Fund Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2015/16:

- £1.5m allocated to the Stadium Development Fund for the development of a community sports and recreation hub.
- £1m allocated to the construction of a full size artificial turf pitch at Hednesford Park as part of the continuing regeneration of the Hednesford area.
- £400,000 is allocated to an Economic Development and Physical Asset Reserve for joint determination with Staffordshire County Council on specific projects.
- £50,000 is invested into the Rugeley Conservation Area in addition to all other funds already committed.
- £50,000 is invested in a programme of environmental improvements in Rugeley Town Centre.

- 6.1.2 As per the Council's constitution, inclusion within an approved capital programme does not confer authority to spend and Cabinet will need to approve Permission to Spend for these projects. The joint Economic Growth and Governance Forum will oversee progress and expenditure. Project updates will be provided to Policy Development Committees, Cabinet and other committees as necessary.

6.2 **Legal**

None

6.3 **Human Resources**

None at this stage.

6.4 **Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

Staffordshire Police will be consulted on design of projects to ensure that they minimise the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.

6.5 **Human Rights Act**

None

**6.6 Data Protection**

None

**6.7 Risk Management**

The key risk is that one or more of the projects do not secure planning consent as part of the implementation process. This risk will be mitigated by securing appropriate professional support for design and planning technical work.

**6.8 Equality & Diversity**

None

**6.9 Best Value**

Best Value will be sought from matched funding opportunities and effective procurement processes for any works.

**7 Appendices to the Report****Previous Consideration**

'Capital Receipts from the sale of Land in Cannock and Rugeley'.  
Staffordshire County Council Cabinet – 16 August 2006

'Joint Investment in Cannock Chase'.  
Cannock Chase Council meeting, 22 May 2013.

**Background Papers**